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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United Republic of Tanzania: draft resolution

The plight of street children

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1/ as a major contribution to the protection of the rights of all children,

Recalling also the World Declaration and Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, 2/ adopted at the 1990 World Summit for Children, the World

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1/ Resolution 44/25, annex.

2/ A/45/625, annex.

Declaration on Education for All 3/ adopted at Jomtien in 1990 and chapter 25 of Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in 1992,

Reaffirming that children are a particularly vulnerable section of society whose rights require special protection and that children living under especially difficult circumstances, such as street children, deserve special attention, protection and assistance,

Profoundly concerned that the killing of and violence against street children threatens the most fundamental right of all: the right to life,

Recognizing that all children have the right to health, shelter and education, to an adequate standard of living and to freedom from violence and harassment,

Deeply concerned over the growing number of street children world wide and the squalid conditions in which these children are often forced to live,

Recognizing the responsibility of Governments to investigate all cases of offences against children and to punish offenders,

Recognizing also that legislation per se is not enough to prevent violation of human rights, including those of street children, and that Governments should implement their laws and complement legislative measures with effective action, inter alia, in the fields of law enforcement and in the administration of justice,

Welcoming the efforts taken by countries to address the question of street children,

Welcoming also the publicity given to and increased awareness of the plight of street children and to the achievements of non-governmental organizations in promoting their rights and in providng practical assistance to improve their situation and expressing its appreciation of their continued efforts,

Welcoming further the valuable work of the United Nations Children's Fund as well as its National Committees in reducing the suffering of street children,

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3/ Final Report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990, Inter-Agency Commission (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) for the World Conference on Education for All, New York, 1990, appendix 1.

Taking note with appreciation of the important work carried out in this field by the United Nations, in particular the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme,

Bearing in mind the diverse causes of the emergence and marginalization of street children, including poverty, rural-to-urban migration, unemployment, broken families, intolerance and exploitation and that such causes are aggravated by serious socio-economic difficulties,

Recognizing that the prevention and solution of certain aspects of this phenomenon could also be facilitated in the context of economic and social development,

1. Expresses grave concern at the growing number of incidents world wide and reports of street children being involved in and affected by serious crime, drug abuse, violence and prostitution;

2. Urges Governments to continue actively to seek comprehensive solutions to tackle the problems of street children and to take measures to restore their full participation in society and to provide, inter alia, adequate nutrition, shelter, health care and education;

3. Strongly urges Governments to respect fundamental human rights, particularly the right to life, and to take urgent measures to prevent the killing of street children and to combat violence and torture against street children;

4. Emphasizes that strict compliance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1/ constitutes a significant step towards solving the problems of street children;

5. Calls on all States that have not done so to become parties to the Convention as a matter of priority;

6. Invites the Committee on the Rights of the Child to consider the possibility of a general comment on street children;

7. Recommends that the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other relevant treaty-monitoring bodies bear this growing problem in mind when examining reports from States parties;

8. Invites Governments, United Nations bodies and organizations as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with each other and to ensure greater awareness and more effective action to solve the problem of street children by, among other measures, the dissemination of information and the exchange of views;

9. Calls on special rapporteurs, special representatives and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights and of the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, within their mandates, to pay particular attention to the plight of street children;

10. Invites the Commission on Human Rights to examine this problem at its forty-ninth session;

11. Decides to consider the question at its forty-eighth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".